



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NIXA WOMAN TO PAY \$10,000 FINE FOR STOLEN VETERANS BENEFITS

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Nixa, Mo., woman was sentenced in federal court today for stealing more than \$90,000 in veterans benefits.

Claudine S. Colvin, 55, of Nixa, was sentenced to pay a \$10,000 fine and serve five months in federal prison without parole. **Colvin**, who has already paid \$92,051 in restitution to the government, was also sentenced to three years of supervised release following her incarceration, including five months of home confinement.

On July 19, 2005, **Colvin** pleaded guilty to stealing \$92,051 from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Colvin's mother, Ruth Wenz of Neosho, Mo., was awarded Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits by VA based on her deceased husband's military service-connected disability. **Colvin** caused her mother's veterans benefits to be electronically deposited in her and her husband's joint savings account at Guaranty Federal Savings Bank in Springfield, Mo. **Colvin** admitted that she failed to notify VA of her mother's death on Sept. 17, 1996, but continued to receive the monthly benefits that were deposited in her savings account, knowing that she was not entitled to them. **Colvin** usually withdrew the benefits immediately after the money was deposited in the savings account, Graves said. From April 2002 to April 2003, **Colvin** instructed the bank to mail a check for the withdrawal to her home while she was living in Florida.

In the period October 1996 to April 2003, the monthly veterans benefits erroneously paid to Wenz varied from \$1,086 to \$1,265. The Department of Veterans Affairs learned of her death in early 2003 and terminated the benefits in April 2003.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas C. Bunch. It was investigated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html